

ONE DAY EXHIBITION



March Sky
Waterford, Connecticut

by Roger Dennis

Meadows, Marshes, Sea & Sky

A Retrospective of Five Artists

Gershon Camassar (1908-)

Roger Dennis (1902-)

Nelson H. White (1932-)

Henry C. White (1861-1952)

Nelson C. White (1900-1989)

Sunday, August 22, 1993

1:00 P.M. - 8:30 P.M.

Waterford Week "Family Day in the Park"

Eugene O'Neill Memorial Theater Center

Waterford Beach Park

15 ROPE FERRY ROAD



WATERFORD, CT. 06385-2896

August 12, 1993

Dear Citizens:

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to the Waterford Week art exhibition, "Meadows, Marshes, Sea & Sky," a new event this year for the "Family Day in the Park" at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center. Each of the artists honored in this show has lived and painted in Waterford.

We are richly blessed as a community to live near a beautiful shore surrounded by lovely countryside. We are further blessed by those among us who can interpret and capture this natural beauty through their art. An artist's talent is certainly a gift, but the sixty paintings and drawings you will see in this exhibition are also the result of tremendous technical and personal discipline.

I invite you to join me and the Waterford Week Committee in sharing in this tribute to five outstanding artists--Gershon Camassar, Roger Dennis, Nelson H. White and his late father, Nelson C. White, and grandfather, Henry C. White. I particularly wish to recognize and thank Nelson White for his superb accomplishment as curator of this retrospective exhibition. We are grateful to the artists, to the White family, and to all the collectors who so graciously lent paintings for this show.

A special thanks for their dedication and effort goes to the Waterford Week Art Show Subcommittee: Ann Nye, Chairperson; Steve Jackson; Robert Nye; and Nelson White. We also extend a heartfelt thanks to the following people and organizations for their enthusiastic and generous support of this event: Louise Appleby, Arline Camassar, Reva Colman, Paul Eccard, Beth Farrell, Timothy and Paul Foley, Alan Gardiner, Don Gerwick, Patricia Shippee, Robert Winkler, and Nancy Wright, as well as D.W. Gerwick Engineering, Millstone Information and Science Center, Northeast Utilities, Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, and Powell Marine Advertising.

The artist Vincent Van Gogh once wrote: "Painters understand nature and love her and teach us to see her. If one really loves nature one can find beauty everywhere." Perhaps each of us will appreciate our town and its beauty in a new way after viewing these works of art.

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Sheridan
First Selectman

GERSHON CAMASSAR

Gershon Camassar, born in 1908 on a farm in Lebanon, Connecticut, considers himself a New London native. He began painting when he was seventeen years old. Early on Camassar displayed an independent spirit in his art, believing that artistic talent is innate—a gift to be nurtured rather than taught. He chose to develop his own style largely through self instruction and experimentation, rather than adopt the style of one teacher. However, Camassar readily acknowledges that his individual style of Impressionism evolved from his association over the years with many well-known American artists. He knew personally many members of the American Impressionist art colony that congregated at Miss Florence Griswold's home in Old Lyme. Among his friends were William Chadwick, Will Howe Foote and Harry Hoffman. He was particularly influenced by his life-long friend and mentor, Robert Brackman, the famous portraitist who resided in Noank. Lars Thorsen, the noted maritime painter, also took an interest in Camassar, offering helpful criticism and encouragement.

Although he started out doing portraits, Camassar eventually found landscape painting a more satisfying outlet for his expressive talents. His work reflects both his love of nature and the area that he calls home. Many of the landscapes he has painted over the years evoke memories of scenes that no longer exist, as southeastern Connecticut has grown and changed. Nonetheless, he continues to find the picturesque circle of countryside between Waterford and Old Lyme a rich source of inspiration. He has also enjoyed sketching trips over the years to Vermont and other parts of New England.

For many years Camassar combined his art with a career as a downtown New London businessman. He and his brother Arthur, "Abe", were co-owners of the popular State Street framing and arts



supply business, Brater's. The store, well-known for its art restoration, also gained renown as the oldest continuous framing shop in the state before it closed in 1980.

A member of the Lyme Art Association, Camassar has exhibited in their annual shows, at the Mystic Art Association, at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, and at the Springfield Art Institute, as well as in local and regional shows. His paintings are found primarily in private collections, both in this country and abroad.

Written and researched by Ann R. Nye

A WINTER FARM

On a farm in the winter everything is quite still. Nothing goes on except for one thing. That one thing causes the wind to blow and the snow to fall to the ground. It causes the leaves to drift from the trees and the clouds to move across the open sky with ease. That one thing is God who makes the sun shine upon the farm and the tree to overshadow the little house like a father standing over his son with open arms. God causes the seasons to change from winter to spring and the farm to become active once again.

Except for that one thing, a farm in winter is quite still.

*Joseph Mehlman, Grade 7, The Williams School
Essay written about the painting "Farmyard in
Winter" by Gershon Camassar.*

ROGER DENNIS

Roger Dennis, born in Norwich, Connecticut in 1902 and a Waterford resident for 30 years, now lives and paints in Niantic. Considered one of Connecticut's premier Impressionist painters, he studied with several members of the famed art colony in Old Lyme, including Guy Wiggins, Frank Bicknell and George Bruestle. In the early 1930's he studied with James McManus at the Art League in Hartford and with John Carlson and Allen Cochran in Woodstock, New York. Will Howe Foote and Robert Brackman influenced him greatly.

In his youth, the Florence Griswold house (now a museum) in Old Lyme was a retreat for some of America's most famous Impressionist painters: Childe Hassam, Henry Ward Ranger, Willard Metcalf and others. Some of the artists, especially Frank Bicknell, Will Howe Foote and Guy Wiggins, took him under their wings and offered helpful advice, criticism and instruction.

The reverence he held for these artists is with him still. Like many of

the Old Lyme Impressionists, he paints the local landscape at different times of day and in different seasons of the year, invoking changing moods. The "mood" of the weather often determines his brushstroke...sometimes quick, and sometimes heavily applied with a narrow palette knife.

His love of nature is alive in his paintings. His earlier paintings included figure and still life, but mainly his subjects are his love of capturing the salt marshes of the Connecticut rivers, woods and glades, rocky pastures, overlooks and old oak trees. And his love of New England: the rocky seacoast and harbors of Maine; and woods, barns, stone walls, farms, country roads, mountains and streams of New Hampshire and Vermont. Roger and his wife, Dorothy, make frequent sketching trips to Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, and he then returns to his studio to record and interpret his impressions of the moods and spirit of New England.

One of his favorite subjects is his own summer flower garden, which he



From left to right: Roger Dennis, Bill Chadwick, Tom Nason, Greg Smith, painting by R. Dennis, unknown, Will Foote, Bill Kihn, Fred Sexton, portrait of William Goodwin. Photographed c. 1939. Photo courtesy of Patricia Shippee.

has painted many times over the years, sometimes using heavy impasto and expressive surface, sometimes with a sketchy look where his brushwork leaves white canvas showing between the colors. His sense of color, light and shadow have a quality of charm and beauty...and the joy of the execution is apparent.

Roger joined the Lyme Art Association in 1940, and has exhibited in its yearly summer shows. His work is included in private, corporate and museum collections, including The New Britain Museum of American Art, the Lyman Allyn Museum of Art and the Florence Griswold Museum. A Conservator of the Connecticut

Historical Society in Hartford, he was also head of the Conservation Department of the Lyman Allyn Museum for 33 years, taking care of their collections of paintings as well as collections of other New England museums and private clients.

Exhibitions include The Salmagundi Club, New York; The Copley Society, Boston; Mystic Art Gallery; Shippee Gallery, New York; Lyman Allyn Museum, New London; and Dassin Gallery, Los Angeles.

Dennis is represented by Patricia Shippee Fine Art of Old Lyme, Connecticut.



Roger Dennis in his studio

Photo by Gordon Alexander

NELSON H. WHITE:

Connecticut Impressionism Renewed

There are few family dynasties in American — or for that matter European — painting that have lasted for three generations. Two examples that come to mind are the Peales and the Wyeths. Another is the Whites of Waterford, Connecticut: Henry Cooke White (1861-1952), his son, Nelson Cooke White (1900-1989), and his grandson, Nelson Holbrook White (b.1932), who is the subject of this exhibition.

The Whites' association with Waterford began a hundred years ago when Henry White first went there from Hartford to paint during the summer. He was also an original member of the Lyme art colony. Among his friends in that group of painters, who were centered around Florence Griswold's boarding house, were Childe Hassam, Willard Metcalf, Henry Ward Ranger, Will Howe Foote, Henry Hoffman, and Edward Rook. Later he built at Waterford, on one of the loveliest points of land on the Connecticut coast, a beautiful stone house which commands sweeping vistas of Long Island Sound. From this base the family has for decades been the leading interpreters both of the landscape thereabouts of coves and harbors, woods, beaches and marshes and also of the somewhat similar landscape of Eastern Long Island, where they also maintain a house on Shelter Island.

For Nelson Holbrook White growing up at Waterford must have been something like an ideal environment for a painter. For not only was nature at her loveliest a living presence, but art and the lore of art were constant companions. The paintings of Dwight Tryon, grandfather Henry White's friend and teacher, were beautifully represented among the pictures which filled the house and studio, as were the works of dozens of other painters, Abbott Thayer



and the Dewings among them, whom the family knew and admired. For the Whites were not only painters but discerning students of the art of their time. From Henry White came a monograph on Dwight Tryon; from his son, studies of both Thayer and J. Frank Currier. Stories and examples of the work of these men and many others were a presence and an inspiration in the household.

Nelson Holbrook White began his studies of drawing and painting at an early age under both his grandfather and his father. After attending Tabot Academy he first prepared for a career in music, studying privately the violin as well as theory and composition. Then in 1955 he returned to painting, becoming an apprentice of the great Florentine master Pietro Annigoni, who remained a friend and mentor until his death. He also received instruction in drawing and painting from the legendary Nerina Simi, daughter of the Florentine painter Filadelfo Simi and herself much admired by Annigoni, who till her death at a very advanced age taught dozens of students, including many Americans, the traditional techniques of painting. Though Annigoni is best known for his portraits, figure pieces, and frescoes, he was also a very accomplished landscape painter. Nelson White accompanied him

on numerous painting trips including several to the United States and one to Spain.

Predisposed no doubt by maternal Italian heritage, White extended his Florentine apprenticeship into permanent residence. He has for many years divided his time between Florence, where he maintains a studio, and Waterford, Connecticut, where he resides in this country. From Florence he takes regular painting trips to Switzerland and the south of France; in America he paints mainly around New York and in Connecticut and Rhode Island.

Though White has painted portraits, he has for some years concentrated on landscape painting, reflecting not only his ancestral artistic inheritance, but also his great love of the outdoors — of sailing, skiing, fishing, and tennis. He is most attracted by nature in her everyday, unspectacular moods which give fullest opportunity for the artist's developed capacity for design and understanding of values. What is especially remarkable is his brushwork — particularly in his marsh and woodland scenes — which at times is almost calligraphic in its strength and interpretive intensity and

brings to mind the techniques of Oriental landscape painting.

Then too, steeped as he is in the Italian artistic tradition, his eye has instinctively sought out effects which one more local in its training and frame of reference might have neglected. There are trees on the horizon above the New England marshes which carry us suddenly back to the landscape in Renaissance paintings — by Perugino or Raphael, for instance, though they also recall the work of Corot, that supreme reinterpreter of the classical landscape tradition. In color too, Nelson White shows his absorption of an Italian sensibility in the vibrant intensity of his hues and his predilection for sunburnt warmth of color. Indeed some of the pure bursts of color in his beach scenes remind us of the similarly powerful color in the late sketches of Turner, who also drank deeply of Italian light and color. And any viewer familiar with the landscape sketches of the Italian Macchiaioli will recognize that Nelson White has studied such works over a long period of time with a very receptive eye.

Nelson White's love of nature even

Continued on last page...



Nelson H. White

Photo by Harry Bishop

The Whites of Waterford: An American Landscape Tradition

Written for
An Exhibition at the Florence Griswold Museum
Old Lyme, Connecticut
October 10-December 1, 1985

This exhibition presents an unusual opportunity to view the work of three successive generations of painters from one family—the Whites of Waterford, Connecticut. The natural beauty of southeastern Connecticut has had special significance to the White family since 1891 when Henry C. White first came to Waterford as a summer resident. His son, Nelson C. White, and grandson, Nelson H. White, were both born in Waterford and [Nelson H. still lives] there today. Together these three artists have painted views of the Connecticut shore for nearly one hundred years.

While the longevity of their association with this region is in itself impressive, more intriguing are the artistic connections that bind these three artists to an American landscape tradition. Bearing the heritage of such painters as William Morris Hunt, Dwight Tryon, Charles Davis, and Henry Ward Ranger, the Whites respond to nature in a very

personal, subjective way. Especially fond of the more gentle and intimate themes of nature—a small clearing in the woods, a meandering stream on the edge of a marsh or a narrow coastal inlet—they avoid the obviously picturesque or grandiose. Father, son, and grandson have been attracted to what Nelson C. White calls the “fleeting, evanescent effects of nature.” Using delicate gradations of tone, their landscapes are often invested with poetic evocation and understatement. Sharing a kinship with Emerson and Thoreau, the Whites strive to interpret the moods and spirit of New England. Their success is suggested by the individual manner in which each artist has found inspiration in the surroundings they know and love so well.

Jeffrey W. Andersen
Director
Florence Griswold Museum
Old Lyme, Connecticut



Henry C. White

HENRY C. WHITE

1861-1952

Henry Cooke White was born in Hartford, Connecticut in September of 1861. He was the son of Judge John H. White and Jennie M. Cooke. For two years after his graduation from high school, he was a clerk of the Probate Court in Hartford. In 1875, at the age of fourteen, he began his training as an artist under the direction of Dwight W. Tryon, an important American artist. Tryon and he established a lifelong friendship. H.C. White published the major biography entitled The Life and Art of Dwight William Tryon, in 1930.

During 1884-1886, White studied in New York City at the Student's League with artists Kenyon Cox and George DeForest Brush and also, privately, with Tryon. In 1889, he became a teacher of drawing at Hartford Public High School and built his first studio. In this same year, he married Grace Holbrook and began to spend summers on the Connecticut coast in Waterford. During 1896 and 1897, he traveled to England, France, Holland, Belgium, Germany and Italy. Upon his return from Europe, he resigned his teaching position and began to teach privately. During the years 1903 to 1907, he and his family spent the spring and fall in Old Lyme, Connecticut at the home of Miss Florence Griswold (now a museum). There he became friendly and painted with other artists who also spent time with Miss Griswold. Henry Ward Ranger, Will Howe Foote and Charles Davis were only a few he came to know.

Early in his career he was represented in group exhibitions but, as he matured, he limited himself to occasional one-man exhibitions. Even



though he traveled frequently, he became noted for his paintings, pastels and etchings of the Connecticut landscape and shore. Although he stated that the Impressionist movement had affected him little, his work shows the same sensitivity to nature so clearly noted in many Impressionist artists' paintings.

Henry White was a founder of the Connecticut Academy of Fine Arts and was active in its affairs from its founding in 1910 until late in his life. He continued to paint until he was in his early eighties. He died in Waterford in 1952 in his ninety-first year.

Paul F. Rovetti
Director
William Benton Museum of Art
Storrs
Connecticut

Written for "The Whites: Three Generations of American Impressionist Painters", an exhibition held at the State Museum of Kolomenskoye, Moscow, May 19-August 19, 1992.

NELSON C. WHITE

1900-1989

Nelson Cooke White was born in Waterford, Connecticut in June of 1900. He was the son of Henry C. White and Grace Holbrook White. Until 1913, he lived in Hartford, where he attended school. In 1913, the family moved to Waterford and established permanent residence. He attended the Pomfret School in northeastern Connecticut and graduated from there in 1919. From the age of three, he was surrounded by art and artists and spent time with his parents at the home of Florence Griswold in Old Lyme. Nelson C. White's early training as an artist was with his father. During 1920 through 1924, he studied at the National Academy of Design in New York City and attended Yale University for one year. During this time, he continued to study with his father and became acquainted with Dwight Tryon, his father's mentor. He also met Thomas Dewing, an important American figure painter. It was shortly after that he began to devote himself to landscape and marine painting.

In 1929, he married Aida Rovetti and they established their home in Waterford. The influence of American artists he met with his father was of



great value to him. The painters he met at an early age, Childe Hassam, Will Howe Foote and Harry Hoffman, among them, were important to his development.

During his life, Nelson C. White exhibited widely. His first one-man exhibition was at the Milch Galleries in New York City in 1930. Even though devoted to his art, he found time to author biographies of two American artists, J. Frank Currier and Abbot H. Thayer. He spent much of his time, also, in serving organizations devoted to advancement of the arts. He also served as a resource for scholars interested in American painting. Though he traveled widely, particularly in Italy, his first love was the Connecticut and New England landscape and shore. He continued to paint until shortly before his death in 1989.



Paul F. Rovetti, Director
William Benton Museum of Art
Storrs, Connecticut

Written for "The Whites: Three Generations of American Impressionist Painters", an exhibition held at the State Museum of Kolomenskoye, Moscow, May 19-August 19, 1992.

Nelson H. White Continued

extends to the still-lives in the show, especially the rare and lovely "Wild Roses". Surely it is no coincidence that they are wild roses and in the simplest of glass jars. Even Manhattan, caught at sunrise from the Jersey shore, stripped to its elemental shapes, is like a natural form — a larger and more monumental extension of the rocks on the near shore. If it is man-made architecture it is as much suggestive of a timeless construction like Stonehenge as of Gotham.

In this country Nelson White has had shows at the Lyman Allyn Museum in New London, at the Mattatuck Museum in Waterbury, and at the Florence Griswold Museum in Old Lyme. He has also exhibited in many art galleries and regional exhibitions. In Italy he has had one-man shows at Vallardi Gallery in La Spezia and L'Incontro Gallery in Cremona. His work is represented in the collections of the Lyman Allyn Museum,

New London; the New Britain (Conn.) Museum of American Art, the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, and the Florence Griswold Museum, Old Lyme; as well as in numerous private and corporate collections in the United States and Italy. At home in two traditions, native and Italian, from which he has forged a rich and unique blend, Nelson White offers a powerfully direct and simple vision of nature's precious and enduring beauties.

William A. Coles
Professor Emeritus
The University of Michigan

Written for "Nelson H. White:
Connecticut Impressionism Renewed",
an exhibition at Hammer Galleries, New
York City, October 29-November 10,
1990.

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CATALOGUE
OF THE EXHIBITION
"MEADOWS, MARSHES, SEA & SKY"

NELSON H. WHITE

1. Beach Scene, Nantucket, 1992, Oil, 12x16, \$2,500
2. Millstone, Pencil drawing, 9x12, NFS
3. Waterford Town Beach, 1991, Oil, 30x40, \$9,000
4. Spring Landscape, Italy, 1991, Oil, 9x12, \$5,000
5. The Marsh In Summer, 1993, Oil, 18x24, \$6,000
6. S. Tropez, France, 1993, Gouache/watercolor, 15x22,
\$3,000
7. The Old Lady, 1963, Charcoal, 18x24, NFS
8. The Port Of S. Tropez, 1991, Oil, 20x24, \$8,000
9. Miner Lane, Waterford, 1993, Oil, 24x30, \$9,500
10. Beach Scene, Long Island, 1993, Oil, 9x12, \$1,200
11. Rhode Island Dunes And Marsh, 1992, Oil, 9x12, \$2,500
12. The Marsh, 1972, Oil on canvas, 30x40, NFS

GERSHON CAMASSAR

13. Autumn Scene, Oil, 16x20, NFS
14. Hill Street, New London, Pastel, NFS
15. Len Otis Farm, Oil, 14x18, NFS
16. Grey Day In Salem, Oil, 20x24, NFS
17. Country Farmhouse, Oil, 9x12, NFS
18. Autumn Glow, Oil, 12x16, NFS
19. Looking Toward Main Street On Winthrop Cove, Oil, 24x30,
NFS
20. Snow Patches, Pastel, 15x23, NFS
21. Late November, Oil, 18x20, NFS
22. The Farm Yard, Watercolor, NFS
23. Haywagon, Pastel, 12x16, NFS
24. Farmyard In Winter, Oil, 13.5x17.5, NFS

NELSON C. WHITE

25. The Basin - Sterling Creek, Long Island, New York, 1927,
Watercolor, 10x14, NFS
26. Spring Landscape, Waterford, Connecticut, Oil on panel,
10x14, \$11,000

27. Portrait of Henry C. White II, 1938, Oil on panel, 12x16, NFS
28. Early Spring, Oil on panel, 12x16, \$11,000
29. Venice, Italy, Oil on panel, 18x24, NFS
30. The Waterfront, Greenport, Long Island, Oil on wood panel,
20x30, NFS
31. The White Plate, 1925, Oil on panel, 16x20, NFS
32. Peonies, Oil on panel, 12x16, NFS
33. The Scallop Boat, Oil on panel, 10x14, \$11,000
34. Autumn Landscape, Oil, 10x14, NFS
35. Evening Scene, Pastel, 9x12, NFS
36. The Scallop Dredgers, Oil on panel, 10x14, NFS

ROGER DENNIS

37. National Seashore, Cape Cod, 1987, Watercolor, 14x20, \$700
38. Bass Rocks, Gloucester, Ca. 1940, Oil, 18x24, \$3,500
39. Beach Scene, Kitchings Rocks, Oil, 30x40, NFS
40. Braman Road, Waterford, Ca. 1933, Oil, 18x24, \$3,500
41. Garden, Early Morning, 1948, Oil, 20x24, NFS
42. Mountain Stream, Vermont, 1987, Watercolor, 10x14, NFS
43. Graniteville, December 1948, Oil, 12x16, \$2,500
44. Still-life, Oil, 30x40, NFS
45. Portrait of Beatrice Ostfeld, Oil, 8x10, NFS
46. McCook Beach, Niantic, 1992, Watercolor, 10x14, \$600
47. Connecticut River Marsh, 1992, Oil, 24x30, \$5,500
48. March Sky, Waterford, Connecticut, Oil, 26x36, NFS

HENRY C. WHITE

49. Early Spring, Pastel, 9x12, \$4,000
50. Litchfield, Connecticut, 1885, Oil on canvas, 16x22, NFS
51. Afternoon In Spring, Oil on wood panel, 12x16, \$12,000
52. Clearing Weather, Ca. 1890-92, Oil on wood panel, 13.5x20,
NFS
53. Autumn Landscape, Waterford, 1892, Oil on canvas, 30x40, NFS
54. Clearing After Storm, New London, Oil on panel, 18x24, NFS
55. Autumn Oak, Pastel, 8x12, \$4,000
56. Niantic, Connecticut, Oil on wood panel, 10x14, NFS
57. Pasture Oak, Oil on wood panel, 12x16, NFS
58. Springtime, Ca. 1920, Oil on wood panel, 20x30, NFS
59. Sweet's Yard, Greenport, Long Island, N.Y., 1924, Lithograph,
8x10, NFS
60. The Old Man, Oil on wood panel, 14x17, NFS